

gate of St. Pancrasio and the bastions on each side, rendered so celebrated by the siege of 1649, were all the work of Pope Barberini Urban VIII., and as if anticipating a visit from the old friends of Italy, he appears to have made them much stronger than General Oudinot expected. It was this papal engineer who stripped the Pantheon of its bronze to melt down into cannons for defending the improved fortress of St. Angelo. I have purposely omitted all allusion to the assault of Rome by the Comte de Bourbon, and the bombardment of the Fort St. Angelo, with all the adventures of Benvenuto Cellino, in 1527, and when Clement VII. (Medici) took refuge in the fortress.

But having seen this fortress become the occasional residence of popes and cardinals since the revival of the arts, we shall naturally conclude that these dignified persons, who have no great antipathy to luxury out of Lent, would not be lodged in rude sepulchral chambers, nor shut themselves up within walls of peperine stone or naked brick-work. In a saloon in front, which communicates with the balcony facing the bridge, you have some pictures of Pierino Buonaccorsi, called Del Paga, a scholar of Raffiello; and in the balcony opposite are to be seen some of the designs of Girolamo Siccedante da Sermoneta. But these are nothing compared with the beautiful arabesques which adorn the ceilings of some of the other rooms.

I should be afraid to trust myself with a beginning of reflections upon the subject I have now finished, for I should be sure in that case to end with a sermon. I will only remark, that however our curiosity may be excited by the stupendous works of antiquity, and however our taste may be gratified by the enchanting powers of art, nothing really interests, either in history or description, but that which was founded for the benefit of mankind, and carried on through ages by the virtue of benevolence. Time is said by our poet to be the beautifier of the dead; but he has not traced a line of loveliness upon the ashes of the selfish emperor who reared this tomb for his own vanity. Time is said to be the adorning of the ruin; but time has but added deformity to the splendid mausoleum. It is some consolation to know that "glory, built on selfish principles, is shame and guilt;" and it may be a moral lesson, not unworthy of the artist and of him who builds for posterity, to learn that whatever in the way of monumental grandeur is not associated with virtuous sentiments, or, as I should say, with morality and religion, will hand down no name to posterity with the reverence and respect, which the architect and the artist, not less than the statesman and philosopher, may lawfully seek to deserve.

RICHARD BURGESS, B.D.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

THE ordinary meeting of 19th instant was numerously attended, the paper of the evening, Mr. Smirke's, being one of an interesting freshness of subject, namely "On the Style of Ornamentation prevalent in the Assyrian Sculptures recently discovered, and on some Peculiarities of Assyrian Architecture as exhibited therein." Curiosity was doubtless further stimulated by an exhibition that was to follow, of some new instruments for describing the entases of spires or columns, volutes, and other curves adapted to architectural lines, by Mr. Jopling.

Previous to entering on the main business of the evening, Mr. P. C. Hardwick was elected a fellow, and it was announced that Earl de Grey had taken on himself the burden of providing the fifty guineas voted to the International Exhibition, thus generously settling at once the questions of bye-law and expediency on this point.

Mr. Smirke's paper entered minutely into the details of his subject, and contained many curious and striking allusions gleaned from scripture and from old historians, and comparisons with Egyptian, Greek, and other styles of ornament, sculpture, and architecture, deducing various interesting questions as to origin and affinity. The paper was illustrated by casts from the British Museum and drawings bearing on the ornamental details. As we shall probably recur in *THE BUILDER*

to Mr. Smirke's paper, however, we need not dwell further on its details, at present, than to observe that at the conclusion the speaker remarked, with reference to one of Dr. Layard's most recent discoveries, of a singular and unaccountable heap of valuables in the palace at Nimroud, that an ingenious pupil of his own had pointed his attention to a passage in Diodorus Siculus, on the fate of Sardanapalus, which appeared to shed a curious light, perhaps on these very discoveries. The passage in question relates to the funeral pyre in which all his valuables were collected together with his ladies and his eunuchs.

Mr. Donaldson referred to Le Brun's work published 100 years since, to show that the style of the Nimroud ruins was identical with that of Babylon, Susa, and Ecbatana; and he was of opinion that Dr. Layard's discoveries showed but a section of a very extensive class of architecture and art spreading over a vast line of country in ancient times.

Mr. Bellamy (chairman) remarked that the arched form of one of the fortifications on the Assyrian sculptures seemed to indicate a knowledge of the principle of the arch.—Mr. C. H. Smith referred to the question, whether the Assyrian alabaster were, like the Egyptian generally, carbonate of lime rather than sulphate or gypsum. Dr. Buckland had regarded them as alabaster-proper, of sulphate, from their crystallization, but not from analysis.

Mr. Fergusson said, with reference to the suggestion made at the close of the paper, that in the most recent of Dr. Layard's discoveries the throne of the king had been found, with the rings of a curtain, and even gold threads, &c., of the curtain itself, and that the ornaments were perfect, which did not indicate that fire had destroyed the palace. Besides, it had been clearly ascertained that Nimroud was not Nineveh. Major Rawlinson was quite convinced of this. The site of Nineveh was pointed out, but not yet excavated. Mr. Fergusson then explained a peculiarity in the yoke and harnessing of a chariot on the sculptures, as quite well known, and still practised, in India. The honeysuckle ornament, or sacred tree of the priests, was also an Indian peculiarity. In reference to a point treated of by Mr. Smirke, Mr. Fergusson said that traces of the Greek Doric style appeared in Egypt from Nubia downwards, and that while he referred the Greek Ionic to Asia, the Greek Doric should be referred to Egypt for its origin.—Mr. Scoles differed a little from Mr. Fergusson. He had only found two instances of any thing like Greek Doric in Egypt, with very imperfect abacus.

Mr. Penrose, at the close of the discussion, exhibited Mr. Jopling's instruments, already referred to, with a few remarks on the advantages to be derived from them, and an illustration of their mode of use. It was while engaged in the endeavour to realise such instruments, that he became aware that Mr. Jopling had carried the subject to so great an extent and with such beautiful results. One of the instruments was merely a straight edge, tapering from one end to the other, and the bar of a trammel with a fixed peg and a moveable one. The bar, while crossing the straight edge and guided by the pegs, one at each of the tapering sides, and drawn along, gradually altered its cross-angled position with relation to the straight edge as it went along, and traced the resultant curve with a pencil at one extremity. Another instrument, describing a portion of the volute, which it also completed by repetition of the process, consisted simply of a piece of wood, to each end of which one of the usual pin-points was attached by the thread ordinarily used, the wood or pencil-holder thus standing in the place of a portion of the thread itself, and in turning forming the curve.

The chairman said the instruments seemed to possess very great merit: they were both new and important.

THE COMMISSIONERS OF INQUIRY INTO THE MARKET OF SMITHFIELD and the other markets, for the sale of live and dead meat in the metropolis, will make their report immediately after the Easter recess.

ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY.—Mr. John Watson Gordon, A.R.S.A., has been unanimously elected president, in the place of Sir William Allan, deceased.

ABOLITION OF THE BRICK DUTY.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer made his financial statement on Friday, the 15th inst., and in the course of it, after expressing his anxious desire to improve the dwellings of the poor, said it was impossible, under the present system, to procure those comfortable cottages for the labouring classes which all would desire, no remunerative interest could be expected by those who built them, and the Government thought it right that no legislative obstacle, at any rate, should be imposed on those who might think of doing so. Seeing that the evil was not confined to the cottages of the poor, but that the health of towns and cities was deeply affected, he was prepared to concede the total repeal of the duty on bricks. He found that the subject had also occupied the attention of that Committee of the House of Lords whose report stated that not only would such a repeal tend to the improvement of real property in towns, and their immediate vicinity, but add considerably to the comfort of the poorer classes. The announcement was received with loud cheers. The abolition of this duty cannot fail to set industry in motion and otherwise effect much good. We are proud of having assisted in ever so small a degree to bring it about.

There is but one drawback at present to our satisfaction, namely, the position of the present stock of the brickmakers with respect to drawback itself. A large and influential meeting of makers was held at the London Tavern, on Wednesday last, after which a deputation, composed of Messrs. Heron and Rutter, Mr. Lee, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Everest, Mr. Hunt, Mr. John Rutz, Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Bird, Mr. Clark, Mr. Kingsnorth, and Mr. Pocock, brick manufacturers, and Lord Robert Grosvenor, Sir Thomas Birch, and Messrs. Cardwell, Osborne, Patten, Greenall, Brockman, W. Cubitt, and Beckett, members of Parliament, waited on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was unwell, but had deputed Mr. Hayter, secretary to the treasury, to hear the deputation and report. After some discussion, however, three members of the deputation, Messrs. Cubitt, Holmes, and Heron, were invited to wait personally on the Chancellor, who, after a representation which continued for upwards of half-an-hour, admitted the hardship of the case, and was much disposed to meet it by "some sort of compromise." We earnestly hope that the grace of a boon so likely to lead to extensive and general good, will not be marred by any injustice or injury to individuals.

THE INVENTORS OF THE PORTSMOUTH BLOCK MACHINERY.

ON comparing the statement of "N. R." with official documents, it appears (as was from the first well known to the Lords of the Admiralty) that the several parts of the block machinery at Portsmouth were invented by different persons, and successively introduced. The friction rollers claimed by "N. R." as the invention of the Messrs. Taylor, not being employed in the Portsmouth machinery, it seems needless here to discuss that claim.

The circular-saw appears by "N. R." statement to have been devised by one of the Messrs. Taylor; and though as fitted up by them it was only in its most simple state, yet as this tool has since been found applicable to a great variety of purposes, the invention of it is alone sufficient to place these gentlemen high in the list of benefactors to the mechanical arts.

Justice was long ago done to the Messrs. Taylor by the late Brigadier-General Sir Samuel Bentham as to their having been early in the application of machinery to the working of wood. He stated officially that in the year 1791, excepting some turning lathes, the circular and reciprocating saws, and some boring tools applied by these gentlemen in making blocks for the navy, no other machinery was then in use for the working of wood.

It was in consequence of this great deficiency of machinery for working wood, that Sir Samuel applied himself to the perfecting various engines he had invented whilst in Russia, and patented his contrivances November 26th, 1791, and 3rd April, 1793. The specifications